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THE NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION.

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Developments in the Yellowstone Grab.

Since the issue of Bulletin 6 on April 15, last, there have been developments of importance in the progress of the Yellowstone Grab Bill, H 12466. A large number of Congressmen who were warned by letters and personal interviews of the impending danger stood to defeat the bill on the Unanimous Consent Calendar, and its sponsors, early in May, had it referred to the House Rules Committee in the hope of securing a preferential place on the regular calendar in order to force an immediate issue on the floor of the House. It was their best hope of success, for, should the bill pass over to the next session, there would be time for the whole country to hear about it and rise to the defense of the National Parks.

At a public hearing on this proposition before the Rules Committee on May 25, Representative Addison T. Smith of Idaho presented the case for the irrigation scheme. Those who spoke in defense of the Yellowstone and the National Parks System were--

Stephen T. Mather, Director of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, who also read a letter from Secretary Payne opposing the bill.

J. Horace McFarland, President of the American Civic Association.

William C. Gregg, speaking as a private citizen of New Jersey.

George Bird Grinnell, President of the Boone and Crockett Club of New York and also representing the American Museum of Natural History and the New York Zoological Society.

John B. Burnham, President of the American Game Protective Association.

Frederick Law Olmstead, representing the Appalachian Mountain Club, Boston.

William B. Greeley, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Camp Fire Club of America.

Henry S. Graves, formerly Chief of the Forest Service.

Wilfred H. Osgood, President of the Camp Fire Club of Chicago, also representing the Field Museum of Chicago.

Robert Sterling Yard, Executive Secretary of the National Parks Association.

Six of the ten speakers are members of the National Parks Association; three of them are also Trustees.

Among the many societies protesting against the bill by letter or telegram were the Massachusetts Forestry Association, Boston; the Civic Club of Philadelphia; the American Alpine Club of New York; the Denver Tourist Bureau; the Associated Mountain Clubs of America; the California Alpine Club of San Francisco; the Akron, Ohio, Chamber of Commerce; the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club of Rochester, New York; the National Institute of Architects, Washington; the American Federation of Arts; the National Association of Audubon Societies, and the Sierra Club.

The defense, ably organized and led by Mr. McFarland, covered the main arguments in the hour and a half allowed, presenting the case for the Yellowstone and the National Parks concisely and to the point. Several of the speakers suggested that, if the corner of the Yellowstone National Park were cut out of the National Park before the irrigation rights were granted, it would save the precious precedent for which we are contending. Such a bill would confine the Falls River Basin issue to the comparative value of certain farming interests to Idaho and of the Moose Range to the whole people; but this was not discussed.

A fact emphasized in the National Parks Association statement was the existence of a new, nation-wide, swiftly growing sentiment for the National Parks and our new National Parks System, the strength, extent and practical idealism of which is unsuspected by this busy Congress because it has never been brought out in any national issue; claiming for this sentiment its full rights in the consideration of a bill which had been so carefully manipulated that the people were unaware even of its existence on the very verge of its becoming law. Time was demanded for the fullest examination.

If the Rules Committee grants H 12466 a preferential place on the calendar, it may come before the House at any moment thereafter for final action. The safe thing to do is to wire your Congressman to watch the situation carefully, lest it slip through with only its friends present.

If, on the other hand, the Rules Committee takes no action upon it, the bill must be presented again to the next session and referred, as before, to the Committee on Public Lands.

But note this carefully. Even if we have won this fight, it is only a preliminary skirmish. The big schemes to grab Yellowstone Lake and others, submerge 4,350 acres of Yellowstone Forest, and carry the "surplus waters" either to Idaho or to Montana are coming along just the same. We may have robbed these schemers of their hoped-for precedent. We may even, in this preliminary fight, have taken a few steps toward a precedent of our own.

But the schemes are coming along just the same. And next fall they will arrive in Washington armed with colossal "estimates" of the amount of wheat this water will raise and backed by political pulls and millions.

Of course we all want this water used in some proper way. One way would be to dam the high fifty-mile Yellowstone Valley north of the Park boundary. But the schemers do not want to do the trick that way, for they would have to purchase the land.

And why should they buy land with good money when they can get it for nothing in Uncle Sam's Yellowstone National Park?

That is the big fight to come. Just now let us make sure that H 12466 doesn't slip through the House unobserved.

ROBERT STERLING YARD,

Executive Secretary.